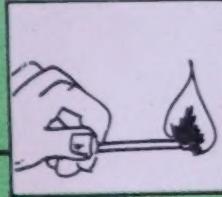


# ANGER



**WHY ANGER IS HARMFUL**



**WHAT TRIGGERS ANGER**



**HOW TO AVOID ANGER**



**ACCOMPLISH WITHOUT ANGER**

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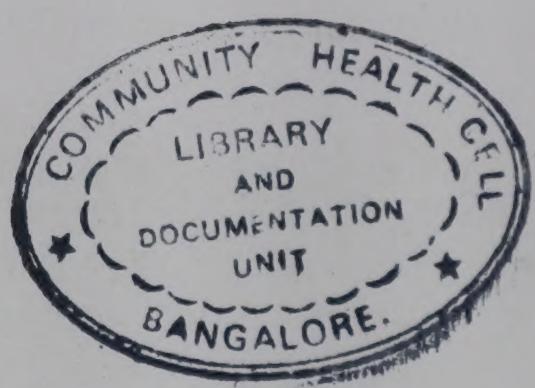
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# **ANGER**



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## ANGER

Anger is a normal human emotion - to never feel it, is never to be fully human. Yet, this most common emotion can be the most destructive too.

Anger can work against the person. Anger frequently turns the very atmosphere into an alienating one, which in turn, prevents the individual from resolving his problem speedily. In the angry position, he finds himself unable to function effectively - which infuriates him further. When he fails to achieve what he wants, he turns critical of himself and of others. His anger spills over and he shows hostility towards other relationships far removed from the original cause.

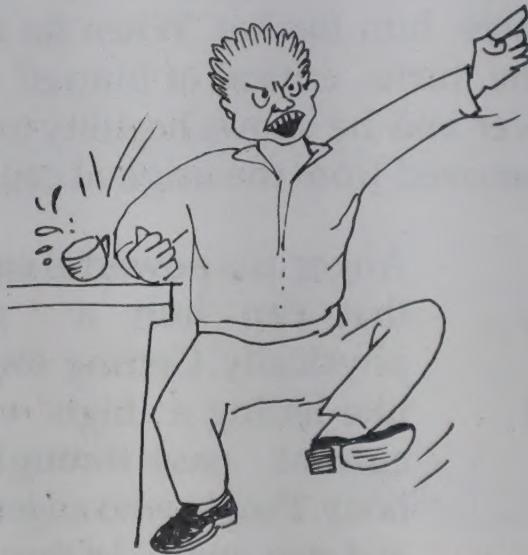


Anger is a powerful emotion that can hurt a person physically. Getting angry, is like letting a high voltage current pass through the body. People who anger easily and stay angry, let themselves in for a list of health problems - headaches, skin problems, back-pain, ulcers, and even heart attacks. Anger is frequently the cause not only behind minor mishaps like tripping, knocking against furniture, etc., but also behind more serious problems like accidents, fist-fights and even murders.

Two radically different forms of expression of anger are delineated below. While some people display them to the last letter, most exhibit different shades between the two extremes. With the same individual, expression may depend on the situation or the person, one is relating to.

i) **'Hot Head'**

He is well known for his impulsive outbursts, and frequently goes blind with rage. He freely vents his feelings and often says things he does not really mean. His anger hurts people's feelings and consequently breaks relationships permanently.



Since the aggressive content is high and his complaints are not clearly voiced, he is met with disapproval, and actual issues go unnoticed. Resentment towards him grows and people move away or simply write him off and never take him seriously.

anger, but achieves practically nothing.

ii) **'All Sweetie'**

She keeps her anger, even when realistic, to herself, to avoid open conflicts. She burns with anger inside; but struggles to maintain a calm exterior as though nothing hurts her. In doing so, she ends up as a store-house of anger and rage.



She does not object to the unfair treatment meted out to her. So others see no reason why they should change. She either moves away and lives in loneliness to avoid further hurt, or continues to hide her feelings with a gnawing pain.

Anger, in both these cases, is displayed inappropriately - vented ineffectively or turned against oneself. In either case, nothing is gained through anger.

We cannot ignore anger or totally eliminate it from our lives. Anger is neither "good" nor "bad" - it just is. Anger always exists for a reason and therefore deserves attention.

## PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

You can minimise, if not totally eliminate self-defeating anger and yet deal effectively with people and situations. Here are a few suggestions that can help. **Pickup at least one or two suggestions which would be relevant, practical and therefore beneficial to you.**

### 1. Express your problems and expectations explicitly

Anger sometimes stems from unexpressed problems, desires and expectations. The mother who is nursing a bad head ache may simply blow up in anger if the child makes a request for a special dish. As she has not told the child about her physical problem, he cannot be expected to understand her pain and display concern.



Her angry outburst only alienates her further and she will not get the treatment she deserves.

When you are in a crisis and need help, ask for it. Most people get to know clearly that you need help only if you tell them so. The attitude of 'they ought to know' is not very practical.

## 2. Speak out your problem by stating facts

By expressing feelings and avoiding accusations, by being descriptive and not judgemental, one can prevent anger 'build-up'. Open discussion about the conflict clears the air and helps speedy resolution.

Raju was invariably furious with his wife when he left for work. When shouting and angry lectures did not work, he decided to tell her specifically what he expected of her. "When lunch is packed late, I get tense because I might be late for work. That's why I shout at you. I become anxious and drive recklessly. I feel bad all day because I know I have hurt you. I would be happy to go for a simpler meal which can be prepared well in time." Raju found that this disclosure worked better than the usual outburst.

### 3. Ask for clarifications

Statements and questions designed to get the other person to speak his mind are very helpful.



Being just as curt and grouchy as your colleague has been, for the past one week, does not help in solving problems.

"I get the impression that you are unhappy with me. Are you?" - may invite him to speak his mind. Well, that may get you somewhere.

### 4. Develop an assertive\* approach

Anger frequently stems from our non-assertive behaviour. We give in more than what is necessary, invite others to take advantage of us and subsequently boil with anger! If a colleague takes leave too often, loading you with an unfair share of work, you can firmly refuse to 'pitch in.' Carrying that anger inside and being 'testy and nasty' all day long, will permanently disrupt the relationship with the colleague and hurt you also.

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\* Effective communication and assertiveness are powerful tools to avoid/handle anger. Brevity has been forced here, as a elaborate discussion on these is beyond the scope of this booklet.

## **5. Channelise 'anger energy'**

Anger produces a lot of energy. Some physical activity may help you to let off steam without hurting yourself or others. For instance, cleaning or tidying up the house helps get anger out of the system, for a housewife. Similarly you can think of some constructive activity to channelise anger.

Prakash, sales executive, resorts to another method when he feels like 'shaking them till their teeth rattle'. "I write a stern letter stating each and every thing of what I feel. Feeling better after having let it out of my mind, I leave the letter aside for a day. By the next day, I usually cool off enough to think rationally. Sometimes, I feel it is not worth writing about and therefore destroy the letter. Or else, I tone it down, use more courteous language and send it across. This really works! I do not ignore anger. At the same time I act instead of reacting."

## **6. Recognise 'misplaced anger'**

In 80 to 90 percent of the occasions, anger becomes **misplaced**. When anger in a situation or relationship is not handled properly, it is spewed on to the other areas, leaving behind a trail of damages. The worker's disappointment in not being considered for an important assignment, may be carried over as irritability towards his wife. His wife, in turn, shows her anger stemming from this uncared-for feeling, on her children.

Your misplaced anger is vented frequently on people who are on your "can be angry with" list - your family members and not colleagues, your subordinates but not the boss. You may punish yourself by failing to handle

the basic issue honestly, and thereby let it weaken your healthy relationships too. Misplaced anger hurts more and more meaningful relationships just as a single stone can set off a number of ripples in a pool.



Stress at workplace is often the cause of anger in the home-front. Discussing work pressures with family members helps. Sharing makes them more sensitive to your problems and you get to enjoy their support too!

## 7. Check the 'trigger'

When your anger is scrutinised, you may identify a few specific situations or individuals with whom you anger easily. Identifying them can be a powerful tool to deal with your anger. For this purpose, maintaining an 'anger diary' for a fortnight or a month, may help. Being sensitive to anger in its disguises (silence, sulking, banging doors or avoiding people) is imperative. In the 'anger diary' note down all events or situations which 'upset' you.

Analysing will bring to light the angry situations and their associated triggers.

## 8. Realise the link with hunger

Hunger and anger have much more in common than the last four letters. When the body is devoid of its energy, a person is not himself fully. Fatigue can make a person anger fast.

Trivial things seem major disappointments and slight disagreements can lead to heated arguments. Discussions, especially those in which disagreements are anticipated, are best scheduled after a meal.

"Feed him if you want him to stay calm" seems a good idea.



Priya takes a lot of interest in her husband's work; but all her questions only elicit curt replies. The reason is only too simple - wrong timing. After the day's work, he needs time to switch roles, relax and talk. With some food and time, he may unwind and be more pleasant.

## 9. Avoid letting anger 'build up'



Anger, even when reasonable, if left far too long, festers like an unattended wound, and turns into resentment, bitterness and hatred. Past resentments - injustice done by one's parents, siblings or acquaintances - are normally carried over as an unbearable load.

'Forgiving and letting go' has to be done by exercising our will. Seems difficult, but is there a better option? To let bitterness and resentments remain, is to permit them eat you from within - a slow suicide.

## 10. Developing a flow chart for handling anger

Devi, a teacher, finds the following steps helpful in dealing with anger.

### Step 1

Am I just upset or am I 'somewhat angry'?

### Step 2

If I am angry, is it because of something which happened now, or, am I carrying it over from elsewhere?

### Step 3

If I am carrying it over from elsewhere, it is misplaced anger. In that case, let me tell the person "Give me sometime, I will

get back to you." Thereby, I acquire some time to deal with anger. I avoid unloading it on the next unsuspecting victim.

### Step 4

If it is not misplaced anger, and the cause of anger is clearly known, let me analyse and think about it. If necessary, let me talk it over with somebody I trust.

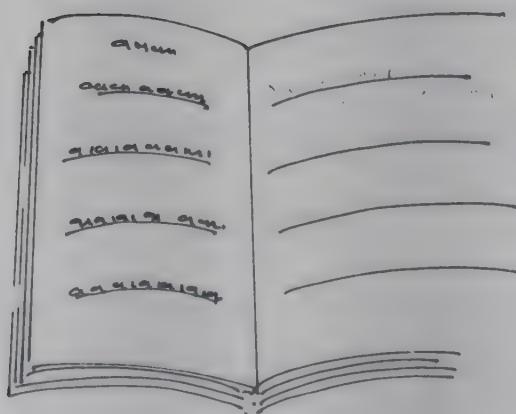
Gopinath, an executive, used the following model, involving simple analysis, and application. He achieved it in three stages.

### Stage 1

Analysed my anger patterns :

- Shouting, screaming at subordinates
- Upsetting wife and children for no specific reason

### Stage 2



Identified specific situations/periods during which I felt angry

- Monday mornings, soon after reaching office
- Day of resuming work following a tour
- Month end (Performance reviews?)
- For about 30 to 45 minutes preceding lunch break
- For about 30 to 45 minutes after reaching home

### Stage 3

Took appropriate steps to avoid or deal with those situations:

- Ate regular meals - especially breakfast (reducing 'prelunch acidity')
- Went for work an hour earlier during peak periods to organise myself and set targets for others
- Scheduled meetings involving disagreements after lunch
- Requested family members not to raise issues for decision as soon as I reached home.
- Reviewed my anger at work and at home every day, and continued doing it for a month.

These few steps really worked!

Using any one of these tools in isolation, or in combination, you can arrive at a model suited to your needs. With this tool in hand, you can check your daily progress about how well you adhere to goals you had set for yourself.

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You may recover from unhealthy anger by sticking to the 'one day at a time' principle. Set goals for each day and hold on to them for just '24 hours.'

Anger is wholly yours to change. Assume personal responsibility for your unhealthy anger patterns and resist the urge to blame others for your anger.

You may start with family relationships - which are usually the most influential and the most difficult, and then move on to other less complicated ones.

### **Remember**

- Practical guidelines are available to you to minimise 'anger reactions'
- You should develop your own model based on these guidelines
- Even if one or two ideas can work, it could give you tremendous relief
- By minimising anger you become healthy and assertive.

Should anger be allowed to obsess your thinking and ruin your life?

Should you punish and destroy yourself for what others are doing?

**Exercise your choice.**

Handle anger sensibly and

Become a 'BETTER YOU'.



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